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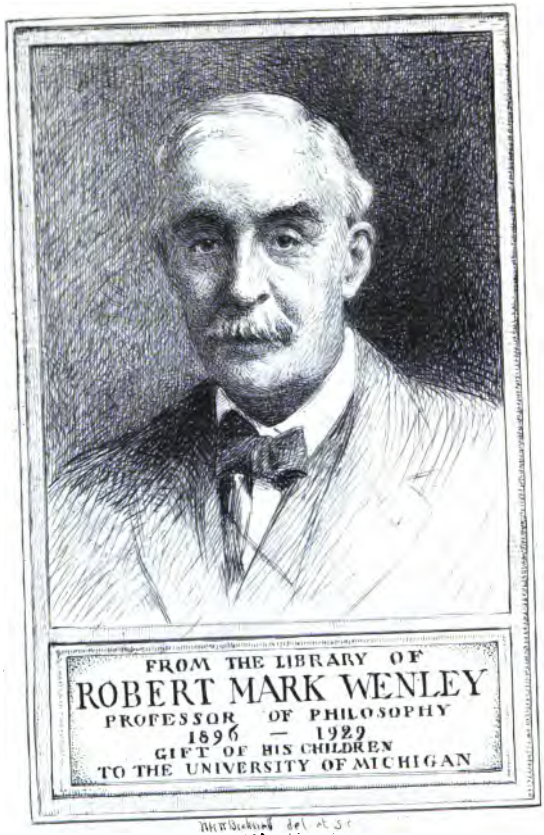
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# WORK FOR WOMEN

BY

GEORGE J. MANSON

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# PREFACE.

When a woman, either from choice or through necessity, makes up her mind to work for a living, and has selected the employment that seems most suited to her, she probably asks herself such questions as these: "Is there a good chance to get work? How long will it take me to make myself competent? Are there many in the business? How much do they earn? How hard will I have to work? Are there any objections against entering this employment; if so, what are they?"

To answer, as far as it is possible, these and similar questions is the object of this little book. Some of the most important avocations, professions, trades, businesses, in which women are now engaged, have been selected, and the effort made to enlighten the would-be woman-

worker as to the practical points of interest connected with each occupation. The information thus given has, in each case, been gained from the most reliable sources.

In the winter of 1882–3 I contributed to the columns of the New York *Christian Union* a series of articles under the title of "Work for Women." They were written with the aim of furnishing to women useful information in regard to various industries in which the gentler sex are successfully seeking employment, and met with considerable favor from the readers of that excellent journal. Through the courtesy of Rev. Lyman Abbot and Hamilton W. Mabie, editors of the *Christian Union*, the publishers of this book are allowed to use the title of that series. It should be stated, however, that the chapters in the present book are made up from new investigations, and that none of them are reproductions of any of the articles in the series alluded to. G. J. M.

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# WORK FOR WOMEN.

## INDUSTRIAL DESIGNING.

A GREAT many women have, or think they have, a taste for art. They can make a pretty sketch, or draw a landscape quite fairly, and so they think they will "take up" art as a profession. And nearly all of them fail of success. The trouble seems to be that they lack originality; they are mere copyists, and too often very poor reproducers of the things they copy.

One branch of art—that of industrial designing—offers golden opportunities to make an excellent living in a pleasant way, but, before deciding to enter it, a woman should be very sure indeed that she has the necessary qualifications to pursue the study successfully; other-

wise her time will be wasted, and probably her heart will be so discouraged that she will be sadly unfitted for any kind of work for a long time to come.

It is *industrial* art of which I am speaking. A few introductory words may be necessary, for the benefit of some persons ignorant in the matter, to show what women are doing, or rather successfully attempting to do, in that line at the present time.

Industrial or technical designing means designing for wall-paper, lace, silk, chintz, calico, oil-cloth, linoleum, book-covers, embroidery, wood-carving, silver-ware, jewelry, silks, handkerchiefs, upholstery goods, and carpets of all grades, from ingrains to moquettes. Up to within a very short period all this work has been done by men, principally foreigners; but talented and enterprising women saw that they were able to do the work equally well, and it is only a question of time when women will entirely monopolize this field of industry.

It will be seen at once that the woman who is ambitious to become an industrial designer must have, first of all, originality. She must have good taste and an eye for color. Drawing must come natural to her. The mere ability to copy pictures, or make sketches from nature is not enough. She must be full of ideas, and for some of the work mentioned (notably carpet designing) she must have what might be called a combining mind—that is, the ability to get ideas from several designs, and by combining them together, make something new. It must be confessed that this kind of ability is rare. Very few men possess it, and fewer women. Manufacturers of carpets and wall-papers say that they have to import nearly all their help of this kind from Europe; they cannot find in this country the right kind of men to do the work.

But because a woman has not this talent for originating largely developed, she should not be discouraged from becoming an industrial designer. If she has even a little talent in that

direction she may find, after taking a few lessons, that the study is very congenial to her, and that she has more ability than she imagined. The kind of designing of which I am particularly speaking in this chapter is designing for carpets, oil-cloths, and wall-paper. That seems to be the most popular at the present time, though there is a good chance for skilled workers in the other branches to which allusion was made.

It is surprising what a demand there is for new designs in carpets, wall-paper, and oil-cloths. One would suppose that a single design would last for a long time; but such is not the fact. The demand of the public is continually for novelty; the fashion changes in these matters, just the same as it does in bonnets and dresses, and each manufacturer is competing with his neighbor to get something pretty and original. A good design can always be sold at a good price; an ordinary or a poor design has no chance at all.

There are two schools in New York where industrial designing is taught to women. They are both carried on by women, and both present their claims to the public under very favorable auspices. Some of the instruction, however, is given by men—practical workers in the various branches of art—who lecture on the special subject with which they are familiar, Here are some of the subjects of these lectures: "Conventionalization in Design," "Practical Design as Applied to Wall-paper," "Principles of Botany" (delivered by a lady), "Historical Ornament in Design," "Harmony in Color in Design," "Design as Applied to Carpets," "Geometry in Design," "The Influence of Color in Design," "Purity of Design," "Oriental Influence in Design," "Plant Forms: their Use and Abuse." This last lecture was delivered by a lady. But the pupil gets most of her learning in the class-room, the lectures being considered simply as adjunct to the regular system of instruction.

In one school the first term begins October 2d, and closes December 22d. The second term begins January 4th and closes March 30th. The post-graduate course commences April 2d, and ends May 25th. Those pupils who have no knowledge of drawing are obliged to enter the elementary class. Those who enter the advanced classes are obliged to present specimens of free-hand drawing, such as flowers from nature, ornamental figures or scrolls. During the year each pupil in the elementary class must complete nine certificate sheets, of uniform size (15 x 22 inches), one each of geometrical problems, blackboard and dictation exercise, enlarged copy in outline, conventionalized flowers in a geometrical figure, applied designs, outline drawing from objects, outline drawing from flowers, historical ornament, botanical analysis. In the flower painting class, three outline drawings, and four paintings of flowers from nature. In the carpet class, one each of a two-ply ingrain on the lines, three-ply ingrain on the

lines, tapestry sketch, body-Brussels sketch, moquette sketch, optional sketch (for either stair-carpet, rug, chair back and seats, hall carpet, or borders, body-Brussels working design on the lines, tapestry working design on the lines.)

The terms of tuition in this school per term are: for the elementary class, $15; the advanced class, $25; the teachers' class, $15. Ten lessons in wood-carving and designing for book-covers cost $12. Six lessons in embroidery cost $5, and for a course of instruction in flower-painting the charge is $15. The materials used in the elementary class cost from $7 to $10, and for the advanced classes from $10 to $12. The elementary class studies an hour and a half a day three times a week; the advanced class the same length of time twice a week.

According to the prospectus of this school, it takes three years to become thoroughly proficient. One year is spent in the elementary

class, and in obtaining a knowledge of flower-painting and making simple designs for calico, muslin, stained glass, inlaid woods, jewelry, etc. The second year is devoted to making advanced designs for oil-cloth, linoleum, silk, and carpets. The third year is spent in doing practical work under the supervision of the principal and her assistants. It would not seem to be necessary for a pupil to return to the school the third year for this purpose. After her first two years' instruction she ought to be able to put her knowledge to business use, and seek to sell her work among the various manufacturers.

In the other school to which I have referred the terms for tuition in drawing are $12 for a term of three months—thirty-six lessons. In the design class the fee is $20. The method of instruction is substantially the same as in the school first mentioned.

And now comes the interesting question, How much can a woman make in this profes-

sion, after she has become thoroughly qualified? I do not think she can hope to get a permanent salaried position, at least just at present. For this profession, albeit a good one, is a new one for women; it is less than two years since the first school was started. Men still hold the best positions, and they receive large salaries, from $1,000 to $4,000 a year. In the present condition of affairs, hedged in as the female industrial designer is by the masculine doubt of the employer as to her ability, and the masculine jealousy of the employé whose work she seeks to do, it would be the best plan for her to do piece-work at her own home, or office. Her earnings, under this plan, cannot even be stated approximately. The pay for a good carpet design would be $20 to $30, and the design can be made in two and a half days. Wall-paper designs bring $10 to $15; an oil-cloth sketch, $8 or $10—the technicalities to be mastered in this latter branch are not so great as in the others.

## SHORT-HAND WRITING.

THE custom of employing women as amanuenses has grown very largely of late years. It is said on good authority that, fifteen years ago, there were but five females in the city of New York who made their living by writing short-hand; at the present time there are, as nearly as can be estimated, between one hundred and fifty and two hundred.

"Which is the best system of short-hand?" is generally the first question asked by the person desirous of entering this profession. And that is a very difficult question to answer, and many of the answers that have been given to it have been very far from honest.

In the first place, it must be stated that there are about a score of "systems" of short-hand

before the public, each of which has its defenders and advocates. Each is highly recommended in commendatory letters from this or that distinguished court or newspaper reporter. Each can show, and does show, first-class notices from prominent daily and weekly papers, and each has a circle of followers who loudly proclaim that the particular system they follow is not only the best in existence, but really the only one worth learning. In the search after short-hand truth, it is but natural that the would-be learner gets bewildered, and asks, "What shall I do?"

The system of short-hand practised by the vast majority of writers, both in this country and in England, is phonography, invented by Isaac Pitman, of Bath, England, in 1837. That system is based on an alphabet representing the sounds of the language, instead of the ordinary alphabet we use in spelling words. Since 1837 there have been many phonographic text-books written by as many different authors, and each

author has added a hook here or a circle there, lengthened this stroke, or made that one heavier; and that accounts for the variety of "systems." The fact is, they are all based on the original phonography of Isaac Pitman, who himself, by the way, was the first to set the example of making changes and "improvements." For all *practical* purposes phonography is no better now than it was thirty years ago. I dwell upon this point, for I know "the best system" has been a sad stumbling-block to many young people who were naturally anxious to start on the right road.

Which system, then, is the best? Answer: any system will answer the purpose of the woman who desires to become simply a phonographic amanuensis. And it is only of that branch of work of which I write, for though there are a few female court reporters in the country, the number is so small and the positions so exceptional in many respects that it is not worth while to speak of woman's employment in that direction.

Let not the student, then, waste any time in listening to or reading arguments in favor of the various systems, but go to a bookstore and get some one of the various manuals on the subject, and begin to study. These books cost from fifty cents to a dollar and a quarter each.

A teacher is not really necessary, but will prove a help, provided he has a practical knowledge of the art. The trouble is, however, that many of the so-called teachers of phonography have never done any actual reporting in their lives, and their advice and suggestions are not of much value. The best way for the pupil would be to get the assistance of some man engaged in actual reporting. One lesson from such a person would be worth a dozen from some of the teachers who advertise to teach short-hand, or who are connected with the various colleges. The price for such service cannot be accurately stated. Short-hand schools and colleges have "courses" of one hundred and twenty lessons, charging $75 for the same.

Students can and do learn at these schools, but the cheaper and more sensible way for the student learner to do would be to get the help of a teacher, as I have suggested, and then only as it was needed. The text-books I have mentioned are very plain, and a teacher really cannot do much to make them plainer. In six months' time, if the pupil is diligent, she should be able to write eighty words a minute, and enter upon actual work, when, with practice, her speed will gradually increase. If she can reach a speed of one hundred and twenty words a minute, she will be as good as the average; if she can reach one hundred and fifty words a minute, she will do what few women ever accomplish.

She need have no fear about getting a position, if she has made herself competent. The demand for good workers in this profession is constant and increasing. Out of several large classes taught by a lady teacher in New York not one pupil failed, when qualified, to secure

a position. A gentleman connected with a large corporation, who employs two lady amanuenses, and obtains positions for others, says that he could secure situations for two or three a week.

It should be added, however, that a knowledge of working on the type-writer should accompany the ability to write phonography. This instrument has come into such general use that no detailed description of it is here required. Briefly, it may be said that it is an instrument to print letters and documents with despatch, and it is worked with keys like a piano. To learn this art of type-writing requires but a very short time, and there are schools or offices in most of the large cities where it is taught.

A lady can learn phonography as young as sixteen, or at the mature age of thirty-five; but it is almost needless to say that the art can be mastered much easier at the former than the latter age. At one of the schools in New York

where it is taught free to women no pupils are received under the age of eighteen. It is a study that requires considerable application, a good memory, nimble fingers, and quick apprehension. There are some people (and this remark applies to both sexes) who would never be able to learn enough short-hand to be of any practical service. But the study is nothing like as difficult as it has often been represented to be. Every thing depends on the student. If she makes haste slowly, and learns even a little thoroughly every day, she will soon find herself mastering the theoretical part of the art, and if she practises constantly, in season and out of season, what she has properly learned, the secret of short-hand success is hers. The necessity of practice cannot be overrated. Hence it is that a teacher is ordinarily of little use. The exercises in the latest manuals on this subject are very well arranged, and it would seem that the art could not be presented in a plainer way than it is at present.

The pay of a lady amanuensis at the start is seldom more than $8 a week. It is not to be supposed that she is fully competent when she starts at that rate ; that is to say, she will not be able to write very rapidly, and she will be liable to make mistakes in transcribing her notes. The actual practical experience which she will get in her first situation will very soon serve to correct these faults. It might, at first thought, be supposed that few persons would desire to employ inferior help of this kind ; but such is not the fact. Editors, lawyers, occasionally doctors, and some classes of business men who are obliged to make rough drafts of papers which go at once to the printer, are often glad of such help. Their short-hand writer can write fast enough to save some of their time, at a moderate charge, and it is immaterial as to the appearance of the "copy" sent to the printer, so long as it can be plainly read by him. But of course the lady will soar higher than a salary of $8 a week, and just so soon as she has become

more expert, she will be able to obtain a position requiring greater speed in taking notes and more accuracy in writing them out. Her salary will then be $10 or $12 a week, and finally $15 a week. It is not likely she will earn more than $18 a week, though mention is made of some ladies who are making $20 or $25 a week, but the situations are exceptional, and, it may be added, the ladies are exceptional ladies. They have some peculiar business ability aside from being able to write short-hand. The employer of one, for instance, can merely indicate by two or three words the kind of letter he wants written to a certain correspondent, and the lady clerk, having simply received the idea, will write a satisfactory letter. If a woman could possess herself of a thorough knowledge of phonography, be able to work rapidly on the type-writer, and have a fair knowledge of bookkeeping, she could be certain of obtaining a good position at an extra large salary, say $1,500 a year; but there is no doubt that she would have to work hard for the money.

The hours of work in most all offices are from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon. The employment is not more arduous than any other sedentary occupation. In large offices an amanuensis will receive from thirty to sixty full-page letters in a day and transcribe them on the type-writer. She could not do so much work without the aid of that instrument.

It is sometimes the case that a woman can take dictation work for professional people who only occasionally need such assistance, and be paid for it by the "job." In such a case the rate of pay for taking and transcribing the notes will range from six to twenty cents per hundred words, depending partly on the class of work, but more particularly on the liberality of the employer.

## TELEGRAPHY.

THERE is one thing favorable to young women who want to become telegraph operators: the qualifications required for success in this line of business are very simple. An ordinary common school education, with a special ability to spell well, and to write plainly and more or less rapidly, is all that is required in a pupil before commencing to learn this art. This may account for the large number of young ladies who, of late years, have sought employment in this field of labor. Another thing, it is office work, with just enough bustle and activity about it to keep it from being dull, with the occasional chance, in times of public excitement, of its being exceptionally interesting.

In the city of New York there are, at the present time, about two hundred ladies engaged in this occupation. They are nearly all employed by the Western Union Telegraph Company, three fourths of the number being employed at the main office of the company. Here and there a lady may be found employed in a broker's office, a position, by the way, which is considered exceptionally good, the pay being generous, with the sure chance of the employé receiving a present at the Christmas holiday-time. But the great majority of women are employed by the companies, in hotels, in the smaller stations situated throughout the city, and throughout the country in the offices located in various villages and towns.

Instruction in telegraphy has become a special feature in about forty colleges in different parts of the Union, and in several special schools, among which the New York Cooper Union School of Telegraphy is preëminent. Instruction in this last institution is free, and the

Western Union Telegraph Company is so far interested in the success of the school, that when operators are needed, graduates of the Cooper Union are preferred over anybody else. The school is always crowded; it is difficult to gain admission, and situations are not provided by the company alluded to for all the graduates. Last year (1882) one hundred and sixty applied at the regular examination of the school and passed, but they could not be admitted to the class for want of room. The school admitted sixty pupils during the year. The number receiving certificates was twenty-eight. Some time since the Kansas State Agricultural College added telegraphy as a branch of industrial education, using Pope's "Hand-book of the Telegraph" as a text-book.

Women can learn to become telegraph operators at almost any age. Young girls of fifteen have successfully studied the art, and women as old as forty have also learned it. But the age which is recommended by good judges

as being the best, is not younger than eighteen, nor older than twenty-five.

The time it takes to learn to become an operator depends, of course, on the aptness of the pupil, her general intelligence, and previous education. Some learn very readily, others after months of study never become sufficiently proficient to take positions.

The course of instruction, in most of the institutions where telegraphy is taught, covers a period of six months. It is said, on good authority, that practising four or five hours a day for a period of six months, will enable a young woman to master the art. Probably telegraphy is, in this respect, very much like phonography—a person may learn the principles of the latter science in a comparatively short space of time, but to avail himself really of its advantages, a great deal of practice is required. The principles of telegraphy are far simpler than those of phonography, but the necessity for practice is equally important.

Young girls learn easier than women over the age of thirty, and yet there are several instances of women past the age of forty, who have quickly qualified themselves to become operators.

The salary of lady telegraphers ranges from $25 to $65 per month. In the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company they commence with a salary of $25 per month; the highest wages paid being $60 a month, unless in some special cases, where they take full charge of important offices, when they are given $75 a month.

What is called a "good" position may be either in the city or the country. In fact, the term good, used in this connection, is a purely relative term. For instance, the salary may be larger in a city, but the expense of living will be greater, and the work more arduous than it will be in some small country town, where the wages will be lower. But, as a rule, the positions in the city seem to be preferred, probably

on the general principle that most young people prefer the excitement and gayety of metropolitan life to the more quiet and healthful enjoyments of country towns. During the summer months positions at the various watering-places are particularly sought after, the pay of the operator being $30 a month and her board. In the large city hotels, where business is quite brisk and important, the salary is from $40 to $50 a month. Operators in the country towns and villages receive from $30 to $40 a month. But, as was stated above, the brokers' offices supply the positions most sought after by telegraph operators. There are very few of these positions. The salary paid an operator in such a situation is from $75 to $90 a month. The hours of work are light, being from 9.30 A.M. to 3 P.M. A woman, however, to hold a position of this kind must be thoroughly competent, and not only rapid, but accurate in her work. She must, too, be a woman in whom the utmost confidence can be placed, and possessed of that

rare womanly gift—the ability to keep a secret; for she is, in reality, a sort of confidential clerk.

A gentleman occupying a high position in one of the leading telegraph companies in New York says, that telegraphy is a good occupation for a young woman, and, provided she has no talent to do any thing better, it will furnish her a reasonably pleasant, profitable, and sure means of employment. But the opportunities of eventually getting a large salary, or of obtaining an enviable position, do not exist in this field of work. Women, he says, do not make good managers. They do not seem to possess the ability, so common even with many ordinary men, of grasping the varied details of a large business, and conducting it with system and regularity. In the company alluded to, there are ladies who have been employed for the last twenty years, but they are receiving no more pay now than they received ten years ago, and ten years from now their salary will be no higher than it is at the present time, if, indeed, it is as much.

It might be thought by some, that from the comparative ease with which this art is acquired, many might take it up as a temporary means of subsistence, and leave it, either for some better employment, or to assume matrimonial relations. But this is not the fact. The occupation seems to be one in which few die, and none resign. It should be added, however, that with the growing use of the telegraph by private individuals, and the starting of new telegraph companies, good operators may be reasonably sure of obtaining positions.

Telegraphy is generally learned at some business college, or some school which makes a specialty of teaching it. The lady who desires to become an operator should be very careful in making her selection among institutions of this kind. The Cooper Institute School is not included in this remark, but attention is called to the many firms throughout the country, who advertise largely in the weekly papers, to teach telegraphy in an astonishingly short space of

time, and, it may be added, at astonishingly high rates of tuition. Some of these schools are good, but many of them cannot be recommended. Before entering any one of them, the would-be pupil should get the honest advice of some man or woman who is engaged in the business, and who knows something of the character of the institution she proposes to enter.

## FEATHER CURLING.

FASHION has, of late years, made feather curling a good trade for women, and fashion, at almost any moment, may make it a very poor business. For the last thirty years feathers have been used every year, but, until within a very short time, their use has been confined to the fall and winter season. During the past four or five years they have been in great demand during the spring and early summer, taking the place of flowers for ornamental purposes. As a consequence, the occupation of feather curling has offered unusual good opportunities for girls and women to earn a living,—that is to say, as female workers are paid in the trades.

There are several processes used in preparing

the feathers before they are ready for sale. Some of this work is done by men, but the larger part of it is done by girls and women. When the feathers arrive from abroad, they are of a dull brown color, and the first process consists in washing them thoroughly with a peculiar kind of chemical soap. Then they are wrung through an ordinary clothes-wringer, and tied on to lines and hung out in the hot sun to dry, or put in a drying room if the weather is not favorable. The work of washing and wringing is done by men ; the tying on to the lines by little girls. After this men put them in big vats where they are dyed, black, blue, red, yellow, or any other color that may be desired, and again dried. Then comes the work of the women, who first scrape the rib of the feather to make it soft and pliant. This is done with a piece of glass. Then they are curled with a blunt knife. After this they are packed in boxes and are ready to go from the wholesaler to the jobber, from the jobber to the retailer,

and from the retailer pass to the purchasers whose hats they are meant to adorn.

Except in rare cases, the people employed at this business are paid by the piece, and all ages are represented in the different branches of the industry. There are girls as young as fourteen, and women as old as forty. The little girls tie the feathers on to the lines, and make from $2 to $5 a week. The work of preparing and curling the feathers pays the best, and women who devote themselves to this branch make from $10 to $40 a week. This last sum is large pay; but it must be stated that those who make it do so in the busiest season, and they work hard, not only during the day, but at night, or, may be, they have some one at their homes to whom a portion of the work is sent from the shop, and in that way they are assisted to receive such large pay. Nevertheless, if a woman thoroughly understands the trade, she can always be sure of making good wages. Some exceptionally proficient women will average $30 a

week the year round. Take a hundred expert workers, and each of them will average $15 to $20 a week during the twelve months. The little girls never earn very much, because the work they can do is limited to "stringing" the feathers, which is the technical term for tying the feathers on a line.

When a girl enters the establishment, she generally works the first two weeks for nothing, then the superintendent is able to see what she can do, and she makes $2, $3, or $4 a week, as the case may be; in six or eight months she ought to be quite expert at the business. To be successful she must have good taste. She should be able to "lay" the feather out nicely, so that it will have a graceful appearance when it is finished. And then she must have good judgment in putting the feathers together, for it may not be known, but it is the fact, that the plume which appears on the hat to be a single feather is made up of a number of small pieces; this good judgment, then, consists, as one manu-

facturer frankly stated, in not being wasteful in selecting,—in short, in being careful not to pick out too many good pieces. Though there are a great number of girls in this business, there are very few who possess all these qualifications. That class of help is of course a great saving to the employer, and consequently is always sure of employment. One man said that on account of high rent alone he wanted to hire all such women. "We have to economize our room," he remarked, "and one such woman would be worth to us half a dozen poor workers, who would take up just six times as much space and waste a lot of material in the bargain. Such expert workers will make three or four times as much as other women, doing the same kind of work."

The trade is a healthy one, or, to speak more accurately, there are no special features about it to make it unhealthy. Probably the worst feature about it is the crowding together of so many girls and women in one large room. They

sit on benches, or stools, without backs, working at a long, low table that runs the length of the apartment. On damp days the windows have to be shut, making the atmosphere of the place close and unwholesome. But the rooms are generally large, with high ceilings. Five hundred girls are employed in the largest establishment of the kind in New York. The nominal hours of work are from eight in the morning until six in the evening, though very often, in the busy season, the girls are required to work at night as late as half-past seven or eight o'clock,

There are a few women in New York who profess to teach feather curling; I say "profess," for I have it on good authority that some of them have no practical knowledge of the business, and aim only at securing a generous tuition-fee from the pupil. Now and then, however, a teacher can be found who is able to impart the necessary knowledge. It has been charged by women that those who learn pri-

vately in this way are not able to secure good positions in any of the feather curling establishments, the allegation being that the proprietors of the same have formed a "ring" to exclude such help. From such investigation as I have made in regard to this matter, I do not believe that this statement is correct. Doubtless many such pupils, after working for a short time in such establishments, have been discharged, but I think the real reason has been that they were not competent to do the work. And it can readily be imagined that the facilities for learning a trade like this would be far better in a large house, where several hundred girls were employed, or even fifty or seventy-five girls, than they would be in a class of half a dozen pupils, who had probably between them about as many feathers upon which to work. It would be much pleasanter to learn the trade from a teacher; but there are many practical objections against the feasibility of so doing. If the girl has not worked herself up from the very foot of

the business, and does not have a knowledge of its preparatory stages, she will be likely to find that if a feather has been misplaced, or is out of order in any way, she could not put it in proper shape as well as one who had commenced at the beginning of the business.

Rather than have any girl or woman hastily decide to learn this trade, I will, at the risk of repetition, briefly recapitulate : the earnings are good if you are thoroughly competent ; and this may be said to be true of the future, although there is a prospect, probably a very strong prospect, that feathers may not be in such demand as they have been, and as they are now. You will have to work hard to make good pay. The work is tolerably cleanly, but your associates, if you are particularly nice in your ideas of companionship, may not always please you. If you are competent you may be able to take work home, but the facilities for doing it, and the want of that spirit of competition which prevails, to a great extent, in a large work-room, may not enable you to do so much work.

# PHOTOGRAPHY.

IT is a little singular that in a great city like New York, there should be but one lady photographer, while in the western part of our country there are quite a number. The photographers I speak of do all the work of making a picture,—posing the sitter, preparing the chemicals, and operating the camera. One reason why there are so few ladies in this business is the fact, that up to within a short time it has been a very disagreeable occupation on account of the nature of some of the chemicals that were used—they would soil the hands very easily, and the stains could not be removed. But recent improvements in the art have removed this objection, and prominent male photographers predict that it will not be long before

their business will be largely carried on by women.

A contributor to a London magazine, writing some years ago, on the subject of the employment of women in photography, said: "I have pleasure in bearing testimony to the fact, that in photography there is room for a larger amount of female labor; that it is a field exactly suited to even the conventional notions of woman's capacity; and further, that it is a field unsurrounded with traditional rules, with apprenticeship, and with vested rights, and it is one in which there is no sexual hostility to their employment." These remarks may, with perfect safety and propriety, be applied to photography in this country.

There are several branches of the art in which women and girls have always been engaged, viz., the mounting of photographs, the retouching of negatives, and the coloring of photographs.

The mounting of photographs is apparently a

very simple kind of work, consisting simply in trimming the photograph and pasting it upon the card-board. But, simple though it seems, it requires great neatness and considerable skill, if the work is to be done fast, and rapidity of execution is a prerequisite to employment in nearly all the large galleries. As an illustration that it is not a very simple accomplishment, it may be mentioned that out of forty young ladies who came to work on trial for a prominent photographer, he could find only nine who were suitable to fill positions. The pay for this work is not very munificent, ranging from $6 to $10 per week.

The retouching, or taking out the marks or spots on negatives, is a much more difficult branch of work. The pay, however, does not seem to be as large as it should be, considering the amount of skill required. Young women receive from $8 to $12 a week. A man doing the same kind of work, and working the same number of hours, would be paid $16 a week.

There have been cases where ladies have received larger salaries than the sums just mentioned, but such instances are rare.

The coloring of photographs is the most important, or rather the highest paid, of the three branches of work that have been mentioned. It is said that to be successful at this calling one must have some taste for drawing, and what is commonly called a good eye for color. Very few photographers employ colorists on a salary, for the reason that they do not have enough work to keep them constantly employed. There are probably but eight or ten galleries in New York where colorists are employed all the year round. The truth is, that it is not alone necessary to be a good colorist—one must be very good; and if very good, she can have her studio and take work from the galleries as well as from private parties. Photograph coloring has come to be considered as important as portraiture. Another qualification for success in the work, therefore, should be the

rare ability not only to preserve, but sometimes to make, a likeness.

There is one branch of the picture-making business that has grown to large proportions within the past fifteen years; it is what is called the "copying" business. There are many establishments in various cities of the Union that constantly advertise for agents to collect pictures. The agent goes through the rural districts, visiting each dwelling, and inquiring of the inmates if there are any old pictures of living or deceased friends that they would like to have copied, enlarged, and colored. In nearly every farm-house there are such pictures —old daguerreotypes of long-lost aunts, uncles, and grandfathers, "old-fashioned photographs" of mother, together with newer photographs of the living taken by the perambulating picture-taker, and taken so badly with the use of bad chemicals that they are fast fading away. Out of this motley group the family will be pretty sure to select one or two pictures which they

will deem it worth their while to have copied and enlarged.

When the agent has collected a sufficient number of pictures in this way, he sends them by express to the home office, where the work is done. Some years ago I chanced to know a gentleman who was in this business; in fact, he claimed to have originated it, and, as he was a shrewd, smart Yankee, born and brought up in the State of New Hampshire, I never had the temerity to question his statement. He had a good-sized brick building in a pleasant little New England city, and employed a countless number of agents, who travelled in all parts of the country, and, if I remember right, he had nearly a score of ladies, whose business it was to color the pictures and to touch some of them up into something resembling life, after they had been copied and enlarged. I use these statements with due deliberation, and say that the effort was made to give them the appearance of something resembling life, for often they

looked like mere blurs. Here and there a nose would be gone, or an eye would be missing, the lower part of the face would be entirely absent, but would be counterbalanced, or, rather, overbalanced, by a heavy head of straight, black hair. These, of course, were very bad specimens, but they came to the office in the regular course of business, and had, to use the Yankee expression of the proprietor, to be "fixed up." These worst specimens were given to a middle-aged single lady, who really had a genius for making something out of nothing,—at least in the matter of pictures. It should be mentioned, however, that the worst of them were generally accompanied with some written description of the subject. But we may well believe that such crude data were of but little service to the artist. The salaries of these colorists were from $13 to $25 per week. The lady I have just mentioned received the latter sum, and often made a few more dollars weekly by doing extra work. At present, she and

another lady from the same establishment, conduct an art school in a city near New York, and are very prosperous.

There are now opportunities for doing this same kind of work, but there is not so much of it to do,—thousands of "active" agents having very thoroughly worked in the best districts of the country. Still, there is something to do, and the salaries paid, though not so high as I have mentioned, are fair.

As I have written above, few photographers in New York employ a colorist on a regular salary. The largest sum paid to a woman is $25 a week, and that is given by probably the most prominent photographer in the city. Others receive from $20 down to $12 a week. But there are quite a number of ladies who have studios, and who work on their own account, among them a firm of two sisters, who employ a dozen young women as assistants. Without a doubt, this plan, provided the woman is competent in the art, and has good business

qualifications, is the best and most lucrative course to pursue.

There has been lately introduced a new process of coloring pictures for which very strong claims are made. It is said that the "secret" can be learned in one lesson; the cost of the instruction is but $5. The method consists in the application of water colors to any kind of picture on paper. Some photographers say there is nothing new in the method, and that the pictures will not stand the light of the sun; others claim that it is a good process, and say that the pictures are both brilliant and effective. The teacher of the art asserts that he can, in half a day, paint a picture, and give all the necessary effects. With the usual method, he says, a colorist would require two days and a half. The process has not yet been introduced among photographers, but several ladies are soliciting work at private houses, receiving, it is said, $4 and $5 for painting a panel picture, and making a good living at the work. For

obvious reasons I do not enter into the particulars of this method, or even mention the name by which it is known. That, however, can easily be learned from almost any photographer, and the searcher for information can then satisfy herself as to whether the business is worth a trial.

## PROFESSIONAL NURSING.

IT may not be known to many that, of late years, nursing has come to be a regular profession. Women are trained to become nurses by going through a regular course of study in what are called training schools, and they receive on their graduation a diploma signed by an Examining Board and a Committee of a Board of Managers. For some women this is an excellent occupation. The work is rather hard, but the pay is exceptionally good.

At the present time there are seventeen of these training schools in the United States. There is one in each of the following cities: New Haven (Conn.), Chicago, New Orleans, St. Louis, Syracuse (N. Y.), Washington (D. C.), Burlington (Vt.), and there are three in

Boston, two in Brooklyn (N. Y.), three in New York City, and two in Philadelphia.

In order to gain admission to any of these institutions certain conditions of admission have to be complied with. First of all, the woman must have good health, she must be unmarried or a widow, she must furnish satisfactory references as to moral character, and have a fair common-school education. All these are essential prerequisites. Her age must not be under twenty or over forty-five. In the Boston schools the rule is between twenty-one and thirty-five; in Brooklyn, twenty-one to forty; in New York City, twenty-five to thirty-five; in Philadelphia, twenty-one to forty-five, and in Washington City, the same as it is in Brooklyn.

Aside from these qualifications, the woman who would enter upon this employment must have considerable "nerve," for she will be obliged to witness some very painful sights, and often be called upon to render assistance in some very dangerous surgical operations. And

yet, at the same time, while possessing the necessary amount of self-control to go through her duties properly, she must be possessed of that gentleness, forbearance, and good temper, without which the most scientific nursing will be of little avail. She may shudder at the first operation in the hospital, even faint, but that is no sign that she will not be able to overcome her want of self-control. Some of the best surgeons have confessed to the same weakness at the beginning of their professional experience. The nurse will soon get used to seeing such unpleasant sights, and, as it was the case with the grave-digger in Hamlet, custom will make her business "a property of easiness." She, too, will learn that "the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense."

The pupil, having made her application to the superintendent of the school, is required to answer, in writing, certain questions; to give her name; to state whether she is single or married; to give her present occupation; her

age last birthday, and date and place of birth; her height and weight; to state where educated; to tell whether she is strong and healthy, and has always been so; whether her sight and hearing are good; whether she has any physical defects, or any tendency to pulmonary complaint; if she is a widow, to state if she has any children, their number, ages, and how they are provided for; to tell where she was last employed, and how long she was employed, and to give the names of two persons as references, one of whom must be her last employer, if she has been engaged in any occupation. And then she signs her name to the statement, declaring it to be correct.

If the answers are satisfactory, and there is a vacancy in the school, she goes on trial for a month, and if, at the end of that time, she decides that she likes the position, and the superintendent finds she is able to fulfil the duties properly, she is engaged. For this "trial" month she receives no pay, but gets her board and

lodging free of expense. Having been accepted as a pupil, she signs articles of agreement to remain two years and obey the rules of the school and hospital. All the schools are connected with some hospital; they are not always in the same building, but in the immediate vicinity. The pupils reside in the Home, or school, and in the large schools—the one connected with Bellevue Hospital, for instance—there are two sets of nurses, one set doing day duty, and the other going on at night. The day nurses are on duty from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M., with an hour off for dinner, and some additional time for exercise or rest. They have one afternoon during the week, half of Sunday, and a two weeks' vacation during the summer. If sick, they are cared for gratuitiously.

The course of instruction covers two years, when the pupil, after passing a satisfactory examination, graduates and receives a diploma. Then she chooses her own field of labor.

In one of the large New York schools the course of instruction includes :

1. The dressing of blisters, burns, sores, and wounds; the application of fomentations, poultices, cups, and leeches.

2. The administration of enemas, and use of catheter.

3. The management of appliances for uterine complaints.

4. The best method of friction to the body and extremities.

5. The management of helpless patients; making beds; moving, changing, giving baths in bed; preventing and dressing bed-sores; and managing positions.

6. Bandaging, making bandages and rollers, lining of splints.

7. The preparing, cooking, and serving of delicacies for the sick.

They are also given instruction in the best practical methods of supplying fresh air, warming and ventilating sick-rooms in a proper manner, and are taught to take care of rooms and wards; to keep all utensils perfectly clean

and disinfected; to make accurate observations and reports to the physician of the state of the secretions, expectoration, pulse, skin, appetite, temperature of the body, intelligence—as delirium or stupor,—breathing, sleep, condition of wounds, eruptions, formation of matter, effect of diet, or of stimulants, or of medicines; and to learn the management of convalescents.

This teaching is given by physicians, some of whom are connected with the hospital, while others, often prominent men, occasionally give lectures. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and head nurses also give practical directions to the pupils as to the management of the sick.

Each school has its favorite text-book on nursing. One of the most popular works is the "New Haven Hand-book of Nursing," which is used in the East and West, and in New York. In the New York schools the "Bellevue Manual" is also used. Among the other text-books studied in the different schools

throughout the country are "Anatomy and Physiology," "Domville's Manual," "Woolsey's Hand-book for Hospital Visitors," "Williams and Fisher's Hints to Hospital Nurses," "Lee's Hand-book for Hospital Sisters," "Cutter's Anatomy and Physiology," "Putnam's Manual," "Huxley's Physiology," "Smith on Nursing," "Frankel's Manual," "West on Children," "Notes on Nursing," by Florence Nightingale, "Draper's Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene," "Bartholow's Materia Medica," and "Miss Veitch's Hand-book for Nursing." The Boston and New York schools use the largest number of text-books, averaging six. At one of the schools in Philadelphia, but one book is used; in Connecticut, Chicago, and Washington two text-books are studied.

While the nurse is receiving her training she is boarded free of expense, and receives a stated salary per month during the time she is in the school. The amount varies throughout the country In New Haven it is $170 for the term

of eighteen months. In Chicago, $8 a month for the first year, $12 a month for the second year. In Boston, at two of the schools it is $10 a month for the first year, and $14 a month for the second year. At the third school it is $1 a week for the first six months, $2 dollars a week for the second six month, and $3 a week for the last four months. Brooklyn, $9 a month for the first year, $15 a month for the second year. In New York, at the Charity Hospital on Blackwell's Island, it is $10 a month for the first year, and $15 a month for the second year; at Bellevue Hospital, $9 a month for the first year, $15 a month for the second year; at the New York Hospital, it is $10, $13, and $16 a month for the first, second, and third six months, respectively. In Syracuse $10 a month. In Philadelphia, $5 a month for the first six months, $10 a month for the second six months, and $16 a month for the second year.

It will be seen at a glance that this is merely nominal pay, but it must also be borne in

mind that the nurse is receiving instruction in what is to be to her a profession. Then, again, she is under little or no expense; she is boarded, lodged, has her washing done in the institution, and the dress or uniform which she is obliged to wear costs but a trifle, the material of which it is made being generally what is called "seersucker."

After the nurse has received a certain amount of training, she is deemed competent to go out to private service. She receives no extra pay for this, her salary being paid into the institution, which, in that way, is enabled partly to maintain itself.

When she goes to a private house, she carries with her a certificate of recommendation signed by the lady superintendent of the school. When she returns to the school, she brings with her a report of her conduct and efficiency, either from one of the family or the medical attendant. While engaged in this service, the people employing her must allow her

reasonable time for rest in every twenty-four hours, and when her services are needed for several consecutive nights, she is to have at least six hours in the day out of the sick-room. Except in cases of extreme illness, she is to be allowed opportunity to attend church once every Sunday.

Appended to the rules of the Bellevue Hospital Training School, in regard to this subject, are the following remarks:

"It is expected that nurses will bear in mind the importance of the situation they have undertaken, and will evince, at all times, the self-denial, forbearance, gentleness, and good temper so essential in their attendance on the sick, and also to their character as Christian nurses. They are to take the whole charge of the sick-room, doing everything that is requisite in it, when called upon to do so. When nursing in families where there are no servants, if their attention be not of necessity wholly devoted to their patient, they are expected to

make themselves generally useful. They are to be careful not to increase the expense of the family in any way. They are also most earnestly charged to hold sacred the knowledge which, to a certain extent, they must obtain of the private affairs of such households or individuals as they may attend."

The field of employment which has just been described, offers great opportunities for the proper kind of women to make an independent livelihood. The work is hard and confining, but the pay, as women are paid, is very good. A trained nurse never receives less than $20 a week, her board being, of course, included, and more often she will get $25, or even $30, a week; in fact, she can command her own price, and that price will depend upon the wealth and liberality of her patrons, and the ability which she brings to bear on the case in hand. Good nursing is very often more important than good doctoring, and thousands of people are willing to pay liberally for such exceptional help. The

demand for trained nurses far exceeds the supply, and, provided a woman has made herself fully competent in this peculiarly appropriate branch of women's work, the extent of her employment will only be limited by her physical strength to render the services required.

## PROOF-READERS, COMPOSITORS, AND BOOKBINDERS.

MEN who employ women in trades and businesses where they have to work for some length of time before they become skilled laborers have one very strong objection against female help. "No sooner," they say, "do we really begin to get some benefit from the woman's work, after having borne long and patiently with her sins of omission and commission, than along comes a good-looking young fellow and marries her."

For this reason women sometimes find it difficult to obtain entrance into the most desirable establishments where trades can be learned. And yet these same employers are not hostile to female labor; on the contrary, they are

strongly in favor of it, but they say that they are not willing to encourage it to the extent of sacrificing the necessary time and trouble in making a woman perfect in a trade, and then seeing her leave them to enter upon the presumably more congenial duties of matrimony.

The woman, therefore, who desires to learn a trade may find this difficulty meeting her at the threshhold. All employers, however, are not alike, and some establishment can generally be found where a woman can learn the first principles of the occupation she wishes to follow; as soon as she has attained a reasonable degree of proficiency in it, she can get a position in a larger and better establishment, where the pay will probably be higher and the surroundings more agreeable.

Of the three employments mentioned at the head of this chapter proof-reading is probably the most pleasant. A woman to be properly qualified must have a good education, and must have graduated from the printer's case. A

great many young women who know nothing about the compositor's trade think they can be good proof-readers, but they may have a good collegiate education, and if they are not familiar with the practical details of printing, as they can be learned in a printing establishment, they will never amount to much as proof-readers. This is the class of proof-readers who "get interested" in what they are reading; they are on the look-out for bad sentences which, having found, they promptly proceed to correct, a self-imposed duty for which they receive no thanks from either their employer or the author whose language or style they seek to improve. A good proof-reader reads mechanically. The moment she takes a personal interest in what she is reading, or becomes critical on the matter in hand, she is apt to overlook typographical errors of the most common sort. Of course, she must be a first-class speller and have a good knowledge of punctuation, though how far she will have to apply the latter knowledge

will depend very much on what kind of proof she is reading. If she is engaged in an establishment where books are printed exclusively, she will find that authors, as a rule, have their own systems of punctuation, with which (supposing the authors to be men and women of ability) she will not be expected to interfere. But if she is engaged on newspaper or general work, she will have ample opportunity to display her knowledge and exercise her judgment in the matter of punctuation. In all important work female proof-readers seldom read the second or revised proof. That is generally given to a male proof-reader of large experience, who gives the matter a critical reading.

The pay of good women proof-readers is from $15 to $20 a week. Those who receive the latter sum are capable of reading "revises." Now and then a woman receives exceptionally good pay for this kind of service. A prominent American historian paid a lady proof-reader $30 a week; but she was unusually well educated,

and capable of often making valuable suggestions to the author.

No encouragement can be given to the woman desirous of becoming a proof-reader who will not learn the practical details of the calling in a printing establishment.

In connection with proof-reading it may be mentioned that young girls or young women find employment as "copy-holders." Their duty is to read aloud to the proof-reader the copy of the author. If they can read rapidly and correctly they can earn about $8 a week.

Female compositors are now largely employed in job and newspaper offices, but it is only fair to state the objections to their following this trade. In some establishments they are obliged, like the men, to stand at their work. Physicians state, and the experience of the women themselves proves, that this is very detrimental to health. It has been urged by women, also, that in printing-offices they are forced to hear pro-

fane and improper language from their male companions, who sometimes, doubtless, in this way, harass the women, sometimes with the purpose of expressing their dissatisfaction at the employment of female labor. But too much weight should not be given to this complaint. In all the large, well-regulated establishments such conduct would not be tolerated, provided the men and women worked in the same room, which, however, is rarely the case; as a rule, the female help are set off in an apartment by themselves.

Employers who have employed female compositors say that they cause a great deal of trouble. They have to have a separate room, and require to be waited upon a great deal, especially if they are learning the trade, while men readily get along by themselves. They are sure to lose more or less time through sickness, and that, too, very often in the busiest season, when there is great pressure of work, and their services are in especial demand. Of

late, the female compositors in one of the largest establishments in New York demanded to be paid the same rate as the men. The demand was not acceded to, and the proprietors came very near discharging all their female compositors, urging the objections which have just been stated, together with the general objection to the employment of female help stated in the beginning of this chapter.

Notwithstanding all these objections, however, which a woman can weigh and take for what they are worth, the trade of a compositor is a very good one. Among men, a type-setter has always been considered the most independent of mortals. If he is thorough master of his trade, he is always sure of work, and with the great development of our country, there is hardly a spot to which he may drift where he will not find a printing-office and an opportunity to earn money. Numerous instances might be related of printers who, being of a roving disposition, have travelled all over

the United States, earning their living as they went. The trade is just as good, or nearly as good, for a woman. She is never paid, it is true, the same rate that the men receive, but if she is a quick worker she can make much more money in a week, as a compositor, than she could at many other occupations. She can never hope to perform as much work as a first-class male compositor; that is a physical impossibility.

Good compositors in the large New York establishments where books are printed (and it is only in such places that women are employed in the large cities), earn from $14 to $15 a week. The poor ones average $9 and $10 a week. Sometimes good women make more than $15 a week, earning as much as $18 or $20 a week. This kind of work, it must be understood, is paid by the piece, so that how much a woman earns depends entirely on her ability.

In many small cities and country towns, especially throughout New England, young

women are employed as compositors in newspaper offices. Their rate of pay is never as high as it is in the cities, but their living expenses are proportionately less, so that really they are just as well off. It would seem, indeed, that such situations were to be preferred. There is less noise and hurry in such small establishments, and, therefore, less wear and tear on the human system. The papers are generally afternoon papers, and, therefore, the work is all done in the daytime. The women are allowed to sit at their work. In such situations they will be able to earn from $5 to $12 a week.

It is, at present, difficult for a woman entirely ignorant of the trade, to get into any of the large establishments in New York, where such help is engaged, for the purpose of learning to become a type-setter. If her ambition lies in this direction, and she lives outside the large cities, she could do no better than obtain an introductory knowledge of the art in some

country newspaper office, or, failing in that, get the necessary practical instruction in some job office, in either city or country.

Certain parts of the work of bookbinding are monopolized by young girls and young women. They are employed in folding, collating, sewing, pasting, binding, and gold-laying. There is probably no large establishment in the country where men are employed to do this kind of work. The industry seems to be peculiarly adapted to young women who are quick with their hands.

Employés in this trade are paid by the piece, with the exception of the collaters, who receive a stated salary of $8 a week. "Collating," it may be mentioned for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the term, means the gathering together of the various folded sheets or sections of the book, and seeing that the pages run right, preparatory to their being handed over to the sewers, who stitch them

together. The pay of folders, binders, pasters, and sewers will average, during the year, from $6 to $7 a week. Gold-layers are paid by the hour and make a dollar or two more a week. This average, it must be understood, is for the whole fifty-two weeks. Some weeks the girls make $12 and $15, other weeks not one third as much. Girls as young as fourteen years are employed, and women forty and fifty years of age may be found working beside them. Nine hours and a half constitute a day's work. Some girls will make more than the average named. Those are the steady workers who, to use the expression of one employer, "work just like a man and don't care to hurry home and crimp up to see company in the evening." Such employés will, the year round, average each week two or three dollars more than the ordinary run of help.

It is said that there is always work in this trade for competent women. But it is a trade that no woman of ambition would want to enter,

unless she was unable to find any thing better to do. There is no chance to rise in the business and get a better paying position, for the rule is to employ male foremen. In only one large establishment in New York is there a woman occupying such a position. It is proper to state, however, that she gives perfect satisfaction, that her employer would not replace her for a man, and that he believes other bookbinders will eventually see the advisability of having a female instead of a male overseer. A man, it is said, is apt, in giving out work, to favor the pretty girls at the expense of the plain-looking damsels, thus creating jealousy among the employés, while a woman is not influenced in that way.

The proprietors of the large bookbinderies make every effort to secure a respectable kind of help, but young women of loose principles, and sometimes, it is to be feared, of actual immoral character, get employment at the trade, and, when they do, their influence is any thing

but good on their companions. It must, however, be largely a girl's own fault if she allows herself to associate with such company. During working hours, of course, nothing but business is attended to. Lunch is eaten in the establishment, and during the lunch hour the girls gather together in little knots and talk about the last picnic or the coming ball. But the place is so large, that a girl of reserved manners can generally keep by herself, or select such companions as she prefers.

The trade is not difficult to learn, the work is neat and clean, the rooms where the girls work —that is, in the large bookbinderies—are commodious, well lighted, and airy. If a young woman, getting her board free at home, wanted to make a little money by working only a few months, or a year, she could probably accomplish this object by entering a bookbindery.

## THE DRAMA.—LECTURERS AND READERS.

A WOMAN need not have the genius of a Rachel, a Modjeska, or a Clara Morris, to be able to make a good living in the theatrical profession. Probably the great majority of young ladies who go upon the stage are inflated with the notion that they are creatures of wonderful genius, and for this reason they fail ; they are so taken up with the good opinion they have of themselves that they will not go through the necessary amount of work, in the subordinate positions, to perfect themselves for places up higher. They want to fly before they can walk. It would seem as if common-sense deserted a woman the moment she felt a desire to go upon the stage.

An old theatrical agent whose views were sought on this subject did not offer much encouragement to the aspirants for dramatic honors. I will give a paraphrase of his views so that the gentle reader may have the benefit of the pessimistic presentation of the question.

The great majority of young ladies, he observed, "who sought positions had been members of some amateur dramatic company, which they had joined from a love of recreation and amusement. The friends of a young woman continually spoiled her by undeserved praise, and, finally, she believed herself capable of taking the highest and most difficult parts, and forthwith rushed to the nearest theatrical manager or dramatic agent and sought a position. In the majority of instances such young ladies had not the slightest amount of ability; besides, experience in an amateur dramatic company was of no benefit. People might come to an agent with the highest recommendations from stage instructors, or actors who had taken upon

themselves the task of giving them instruction —who had spoken of them as 'promising pupils'—and yet, when they came to go upon the stage, they did not show the slightest degree of talent for the profession. An amateur experience was no criterion to go by.

"When," said the dramatic agent, "I managed the tour of Mr. ——— (mentioning the name of one of our leading tragedians), I had to select the company which was to support him. Yielding to the solicitations of an old friend I engaged a young lady who had been studying with Miss ———, one of the brightest stars on the American stage. Miss ——— told me that she considered her a most promising young woman, and had it not been that her manager had already selected her company, she would have been glad to have had her in her own company. She felt sure if I took her I would be pleased. I engaged her, and was never more mistaken in my ideas in all my life. She thought she could act, but she did not know the

first principles of acting. Offended at my plain criticisms on her efforts she went to Mr. ———, the star, and complained that she thought I was prejudiced against her, and had been unjust and unkind. But Mr. ——— repeated, kindly but plainly, the substance of what I had said. She had left a good paying position to seek dramatic fame only to find dramatic failure. At the end of the season she became convinced of the truth of our criticisms, and quit the stage forever."

It must be stated here that the stage is largely run on what is called the "combination" plan, and a very poor plan it is. In the old times the theatres had what were called "stock" companies; that is, the company was made up of a certain number of members, each member having a particular line of "business," and keeping to that line year after year, in the same company, which remained in the same theatre. At the present time there are only two "stock" companies in the United States.

The great majority of theatrical enterprises are called "combinations." In old times the actor had to suit himself to the play; nowadays the play is written to suit the actor. A comedian can sing and dance, or "make up" good as a Jew, a negro, or an eccentric German, and forthwith he gets some author to write a play for him in which his "strong" points will be made to plainly appear. Then he selects his company, picking out men and women that he may deem suitable for the characters they are to assume. Then the company is christened "The Great Jones Combination," or "The Great Scott Combination," as the case may be, and off it starts for a more or less successful tour throughout the country.

Sterling, old-time actors like John Gilbert, William Warren, Joseph Jefferson, and men of that school, lament the decadence of the "stock" company system. But, in the dramatic as in the real world, we must take things as we find them, and the fact is that there is very

little chance for a young lady who would be an actress to get a thorough knowledge of her art —that is, thorough as it is understood by those in the front rank of the profession, who have reached their position by following the old methods.

On the other hand, the stage never offered so many opportunities for bright young women with dramatic talent to make a living as it does at the present time. Every city, both large and small, can boast of its theatre or opera-house, and in many of the large towns throughout the country there are town-halls arranged with a view to accommodate some of the minor theatrical combinations.

The young lady who would succeed in making a fair living on the stage must, first of all, be attractive. The stage appeals as much to the eye as it does to the ear, and there is scarcely an instance of an ugly actress being successful, or, indeed, even having the opportunity of exhibiting herself on the stage.

It seems to be the general opinion among actors and theatrical managers that the instruction received from professors of elocution is of little or no account. As to the experience gained from performing in amateur companies, there is a difference of opinion. The dramatic agent whose views have just been given speaks, it will be seen, very strongly against the amateur actor. Others, however, whose opinions are entitled to great weight, say that experience gained in amateur organizations is always valuable. The manager of one of the principal theatres in New York—a theatre, too, that has had an unusually large number of travelling companies on the road—told the writer that he had employed a large number of amateur actors, and that some of the greatest pecuniary successes had been made by actors and actresses who had come to him from some amateur theatrical company. Of course, the new-comers were not successful at first. They had to serve an apprenticeship on the regular

stage; but he meant to say that their previous experience, amateur though it was, had been a benefit to them, and that they had got along quicker than they would if they had been without it.

"Utility business" is the kind of work a young woman going upon the stage must first expect to do; or, to speak more accurately, according to the technique of the profession, she will first be allowed to make an "announcement." She will come on the stage and say, "My lady, a letter," or make some other simple speech to the extent of one or two lines. If she does this well, she will be given parts where there is more to say, until, finally, she has reached thirty lines, at which point she is capable of being entrusted with a "responsible" part. The salary of this class of actresses ranges from $15 to $30 per week.

If she does not start in this line of business, she may be a "ballet lady,"—not a dancer, but one of the group of ladies that make up the

ballroom or party scenes. In this case, she will start on a salary of from $5 to $7 per week. If she is very pretty, she will get $7; if she is an "ancient,"—that is, rather old and decidedly plain,—she will get only $5. The ability to sing commands an extra dollar per week. The manager of the theatre alluded to above said, that in one of their companies they employed a young lady without previous theatrical experience. She was, however, very quick to learn, and commencing on a salary of $20 a week, she quickly made herself valuable. After a while a part was given her in which she made "a hit," and her salary has been increased until now it is $70 a week when she is travelling, and $55 a week when she plays in New York City, the extra $15 given to her when she is away being for hotel expenses.

There has been so much said and written on the morals of the stage that it will not be necessary here to warn the young dramatic aspirant that this is a branch of the subject which she

should well consider. That there are actresses who are good women, fulfilling nobly all the duties of wives, mothers, and sisters, nobody pretends to deny. But that the stage offers very strong and dangerous temptations to young and pretty women is a fact which every one who knows any thing about the subject will admit. These temptations are not in the theatre itself. The profession of acting is conducted on purely business principles. Life behind the scenes is dull, uninteresting, matter-of-fact. The actors and the actresses are full of their work, and the whole place is decidedly unromantic. But there are great temptations from without the theatre, into the details of which it is not necessary to enter. It is not necessary that she should yield to these temptations, nor are they, probably, all things considered, any greater or stronger than the pretty shop-girl has to meet. But if she values her character she will, when she enters this profession, make up her mind to devote herself thoroughly to work, and she will

be particularly careful about the acquaintances she forms with the opposite sex, and above all avoid that large and growing class of silly men, both young and old, who love to boast that they number an "actress" among their female acquaintances.

In the *North American Review* for December, 1882, there was published a symposium on the subject of success on the stage. There are so many young ladies whose ambition lies in the direction of the drama, and the contribution referred to contained such wholesome advice, that I am tempted to quote from it at considerable length. There were six contributors: John McCullough, Joseph Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, William Warren, Miss Maggie Mitchell, and Madame Helena Modjeska. The views of the lady contributors will be found of especial interest to the readers of this book.

The article was addressed more particularly to those whose ambition it is to reach the highest rank in the profession, but the extracts

contain many useful hints for those who are simply looking forward to a respectable, well-paying "utility" position on the stage.

Miss Mitchell says :—

"To succeed on the stage, the candidate must have a fairly prepossessing appearance, a mind capable of receiving picturesque impressions easily and deeply, a strong, artistic sense of form and color, the faculty of divesting herself of her own mental as well as physical identity, a profound sympathy with her art, utter sincerity in assuming a character, power enough over herself to refrain from analyzing or dissecting her part, a habit of generalization, and at the same time a quick eye and ready invention for detail, a resonant voice, a distinct articulation, natural grace, presence of mind, a sense of humor so well under control that it will never run riot; the gift of being able to transform herself, at will, into any type of character; pride, even conceit, in her work; patience, tenacity of purpose, industry, good-

humor, and docility. She must behave, in her earlier years, very much as if she were a careful, self-respecting scholar, taking lessons of people better informed than herself, with her eyes and ears constantly open and ready to receive impressions.

"She should begin by getting, if possible, into a stock company, even in the most inferior capacity, keeping within reach of the influence of her home,—or by joining a reputable combination on the road. Managers, no matter what may be said to the contrary, are always eagerly looking for talent in the bud, and if a young girl, with reasonable pretensions to good looks, who is modest and well-behaved, and shows the slightest ability with a common-sense readiness to begin at the bottom of the ladder, should offer herself for an engagement, the chances are that she would get it with much less difficulty than she imagined. There are, no doubt, numerous candidates, even for the smallest positions on the stage, but those

who possess even moderate qualifications are extremely rare. Managers have, at present, to take the best they can pick from a host of worse than interlopers.

"I do not think that novices reap any practical benefit from private lessons. The neophyte learns not merely of her professional teacher, but of her audience; and to be informed by the one without being influenced by the other is to have very lopsided instruction. The stage itself is the best, in fact, the only school for actresses. It is a profession made up of traditions and precedents and technicalities. Mere oral advice, or training in elocution or gesture, counts for very little. They are, in fact, too often obstacles which have to be eventually and with difficulty surmounted. In some instances I have known 'instruction' —of this sort—to bring about as prejudicial effects as if the victim had tried to learn the art of swimming at a dancing academy, and then put the knowledge thus gained into practice.

The modulations of the voice and the language of illustrative gesture ought to be either taught by example or insensibly acquired by experience. To learn them by precept and rule has for a result, usually, that woodenness and jerkiness which one cannot help noticing in the 'youthful prodigies' of the stage. To be an actress one has to learn other things than merely how to act, and that is why nobody ever succeeded in the profession who tried to enter it at the top. * * *

"The early bent of her studies and reading should be precisely the same as that of any other woman aspiring to be liberally educated. She should, if possible, speak French, at all events read it. She should be familiar with English literature. She should cultivate an acquaintance, through books and otherwise, with the highest as well as the lowest forms of human society. Refinement and general information ought to be the characteristics of every actress. * * *

"It would be bold for me to pretend to descry the chances of success for the actress of the future. It is a lottery, this profession of ours, in which even the prizes are, after all, not very considerable. My own days, spent most of them far from my children and the comforts and delights of my home, are full of exhausting labor. Rehearsals and other business occupy me from early morning to the hour of performance, with brief intervals for rest and food and a little sleep. In the best hotels my time is so invaded that I can scarcely live comfortably, much less luxuriously. At the worst, existence becomes a torment and a burden. I am the eager, yet weary, slave of my profession, and the best it can do for me—who am fortunate enough to be included among its successful members—is to barely palliate the suffering of a forty-weeks' exile from my own house and my family.

"For those of our calling who have to make this weary round, year after year, with disap-

pointed ambitions and defeated hopes as their inseparable company, I can feel from the bottom of my heart. Each season makes the life harder and drearier; each year robs it of one more prospect, one more chance, one more opportunity to try and catch the fleeting bubble in another field."

Madame Modjeska writes:

"* * * It would be a great mistake to choose the profession with the idea that money comes easier and work is less hard in this than in any other. There is little hope for the advancement of such aspirants.

"There is no greater mistake than to suppose that mere professional training is the only necessary education. The general cultivation of the mind, the development of all the intellectual faculties, the knowledge how to think, are more essential to the actor than mere professional instruction. In no case should he neglect the other branches of art; all of them being so nearly akin, he cannot attain to a fine artistic

taste if he is entirely unacquainted with music, the plastic arts, and poetry.

"The best school of acting seems to me to be the stage itself—when one begins by playing small parts, and slowly, step by step, reaches the more important ones. There is a probability that if you play well a minor character, you will play greater ones well by and by; while if you begin with the latter, you may prove deficient in them, and afterward be both unwilling and unable to play small parts. It was my ill-fortune to be put, soon after my entrance on the stage, in the position of a star in a travelling company. I think it was the greatest danger I encountered in my career, and the consequence was that when I afterward entered a regular stock company, I had not only a great deal to learn, but much more to unlearn.

"The training by acting, in order to be useful, requires a certain combination of circumstances. It is good in the stock companies of Europe, because with them the play-bill is constantly

changed, and the young actor is required to appear in a great variety of characters during a short period. But it may prove the reverse of good in a theatre where the beginner may be compelled for a year or so to play one insignificant part. Such a course would be likely to kill in him all the love of his art, render him a mechanical automaton, and teach him but very little.

"Private instruction can be given either by professors of elocution or by experienced actors. I know nothing of the first, as there are no professors of elocution, to my knowledge, outside of America and of England, and I never knew one personally. But speaking of private lessons given by experienced actors, there are certainly a great many arguments and instances in favor of that mode of instruction. Of course, a great deal depends upon the choice of the teacher. But, supposing he is capable, he can devote more time to a private pupil than he can to one in a public school. Some of the greatest

actresses that ever lived owed, in great part, their success to the instructions of an experienced actor, of less genius than themselves. Take, for instance, Rachel and Samson. Strange to say, it happens often that very good actors make but poor professors, while the best private teacher I ever met was, like Michonnet, but an indifferent actor himself. The danger is that the pupil in this kind of instruction may become a mere imitator of his model. Imitation is the worst mode of learning, and the worst method in art, as it kills the individual creative power, and in most cases, the imitators only follow the peculiar failings of their model.

"There are many objections to dramatic schools, some of which are very forcible. There is in them, as in private teaching, the danger of imitation, and of getting into a purely mechanical habit, which produces conventional, artificial acting. Yet it is not to be denied that a great number of the best French and German actresses and actors have been pupils of

dramatic schools, and that two of the schools—those of Paris and Vienna—have justly enjoyed a great celebrity. Of the schools I have known personally I cannot speak very favorably. One point must be borne in mind; a dramatic school ought to have an independent financial basis, and not rely for its support on the number of its pupils, because in such a case the managers might be induced to receive candidates not in the least qualified for the dramatic profession.

"Of the three elements that, in my opinion, go to make up a good dramatic artist, the first one, technique, must be acquired by professional training; the second and higher one, which is art itself, originates in a natural genius, but can and ought to be improved by the general cultivation of the mind. But there is yet something beyond these two: it is inspiration. This cannot be acquired or improved, but it can be lost by neglect. Inspiration, which Jefferson calls his demon, and

which I would call my angel, does not depend upon us. Happy the moments when it responds to our appeal. It is only at such moments that an artist can feel satisfaction in his work—pride in his creation ; and this feeling is the only real and true success which ought to be the object of his ambition."

There is but very little chance for women to succeed as lecturers at the present time. Some few years ago the country seemed to be overrun with orators, both male and female. Probably the woman-suffrage excitement had a great deal to do with this ; at all events, there is not much demand now for female eloquence. Twelve years ago a number of distinguished women were before the public. Anna Dickinson spoke on politics ; since then she entered the dramatic profession. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, spoke about woman suffrage, a subject which seems for the time to have died out. Olive Logan talked on social topics ; now she is in Europe. Mrs. Livermore is the only female

orator of that time who is now before the public, and she is as successful now as she was then.

As public readers, women who have a talent in that direction have an excellent chance at the present time. "Readings" are getting to be a very popular form of entertainment. The theatres are offering such poor and trashy attractions that many educated people who want to be amused, are forced to seek diversion in this way. The general spread of culture is also, probably, creating a taste in this direction.

The lady who would succeed as a public reader must, like the actress, be good-looking. The most successful lady readers now before the public are physically attractive. Some of them are large, fine-looking women, while others are petite; but no matter what the particular style of beauty may be, they are all pleasing in their personal appearance.

The woman who wants to make public reading a profession will do all she can to get her name and profession before the public. At first

she will give free readings before church societies. In this way she will gradually become known, and, after a while, she will be able to appear before some lyceum in the small outlying towns. If she is favorably received she will be invited to come again, and so, gradually, her name and fame will become known, and if she has the necessary talent she will eventually command very good pay.

At first she will give free readings. Her readings for pay will, in the beginning, bring her from $10 to $25 a reading. After that the compensation will increase, according to her reputation as a reader. The very best female readers, or "elocutionists," as they prefer to term themselves, receive as much as $500 for one entertainment.

The social position which a lady occupies will have much to do with her success. If she has a large circle of influential friends in good social standing, provided, of course, she is talented, she will find the road to success much easier than it otherwise would be.

## BOOK-AGENTS.

CANVASSING for books is a business in which some men have been known to make $10,000 a year, and a large number of other men have earned $2,000 and $3,000 in the same length of time. This is an occupation which, under certain conditions, is admitted to be just as suitable for a woman as a man.

The newspapers have poked a great deal of fun at book-agents, and their ridicule has, doubtless, deterred many a person from following the occupation. A young man, a book-agent, once wrote for advice to the editor of a New York paper. He said that he had followed the calling for some time, and that he made, the year round, from $50 to $60 a week. He liked the work of travelling from place to place, but he had doubts

as to whether his calling was a respectable one. Would it not be better for him to get some other employment? The editor promptly informed him that the work he was doing was not only respectable but exceedingly useful; that many persons were glad to see him present to their notice the new and useful books he was endeavoring to sell; that his earnings were exceptionally large, and that it would be a long time before he could hope to earn as much in any other business. By all means he should remain a book-agent.

It is said by the publishers of books that women make excellent book-agents; they cannot hope to make as much money as the very best male agents, but if they have the necessary qualifications they can do very well. The prerequisites required can be summed up under four heads:

First of all, a woman must have pretty good health; if she has not, she will not be able to go through the necessary amount of physical

exercise involved in the work. But it is not necessary that she shall be perfectly sound in body. Many a woman enters the business because she has a delicate constitution, and because she believes that the exercise she will be obliged to take will do her good. And if her ailments are not too serious, she is seldom disappointed in this respect.

Second, she must have a great deal of what business men call "push," and what some people might term impudence. She cannot afford to be nervous about going into stores, offices, and houses, and offering what she has for sale. Nor will it go well with her if she is bad-natured, and shows temper when she is not greeted cordially by the master or mistress of the house. She must have smiles and pleasant words for those who do not buy as well as for those who do.

Third, she must be a good judge of human nature, and on this one commandment, probably, hangs all the law and the prophets of book-

canvassing. For, if she has been a student of mankind she will use great judgment in her vocation. She will call at the proper time, at the proper place, upon the kind of people who will most likely want to see her, or rather the book she has to offer. She will, by her demeanor, win the respect of the men, the admiration of the women, and the love of the children. It seems like saying a great deal too much, but it is a fact, that there are some lady book-agents whose calls are remembered as angels' visits, so agreeable were they in their manners, so charming in conversation. It must be admitted, however, that there are not many such women roaming up and down through the country.

Last of all, she must have great perseverance, and work continuously. Women get very easily discouraged, no matter what occupation they pursue, if they do not very quickly see some substantial return for their work. The idea that "hope springs eternal in the human breast," was certainly never meant to apply to women;

nor, maybe, was it meant to, seeing that it occurs in the "Essay on Man." The female book-agent is very much depressed if she does not make good earnings at the start. Her depression so affects her spirits that she cannot be as industrious as she otherwise would, and so she does more and more poorly until, finally, she gives up the business. Men agents do not, as a rule, become discouraged so easy. They know that provided they have got a good book, published by a good house, it is only a question of time when they will be making good earnings. Women should go to work in the same spirit.

If poor success is apt to discourage a woman (and, in what I say now I am only the mouthpiece of several publishers I have seen), a run of very good luck is liable to demoralize her. It is said that some lady agents, after making a considerable sum of money in a short space of time, will at once stop work, and, retiring to their homes, will not think of following the em-

ployment until their means are exhausted. Of course that is foolish. While they are spending their time in idleness some new-comer has been assigned to the field they found so profitable. When they return to work it is with a listless spirit, and it will be quite a while before they can summon up that old-time energy, which comes, in any vocation, from long and continuous performance.

Women book-agents—and, in defence of this ungallant remark, I must state again that "I say the tale as 't was said to me"—women book-agents are apt to waste a great deal of time in the spring and fall in getting their wardrobes ready for the coming season. "Who ever knew of a man," remarked a cynical publisher, "stopping work for two or three weeks because he was going to have a suit of clothes made? No one. And yet you will find a female book-agent stop canvassing in the busiest season in order to superintend the making of her dresses." Of course, all lady book-agents do

not adopt this practice, but it is well to allude to the custom, because it is very unbusiness-like, and furnishes a hint in the direction of how not to succeed.

Two classes of women, publishers find, seek the employment of book-canvassing. A great many young ladies enter the business—it might be said skip into it—with all the gayety and with all the inexperience of youth. These young persons are about eighteen or nineteen years of age; they are buoyant of nature, full of hope, bursting with self-confidence. They work a few days or weeks, then abandon the business, tearfully proclaiming that it was n't any thing like what they thought it would be.

The really successful female book-agent belongs to the second class. She is of middle age, sometimes single, sometimes a widow, or, it may be, she is married, and is bravely assisting a sick or unfortunate husband in the support of the family. Such a woman enters the business with the idea of making it her voca-

tion. If she is a single lady or a widow, she is not on the look-out for a husband, when she should be carefully watching for customers. Having passed the youthful stage of life, she is apt to be a pretty good judge of human nature, and, at all events, she will be quick to learn the ways and weaknesses of men when she is thus forced to daily come in contact with them.

The earnings of this latter class of women are sometimes very large. Of course, the reader understands that book-agents almost invariably work upon a commission.

That commission varies. On some books it is only ten per cent.; on others it is sixty per cent. The better the book the less the per centage of profit; but, let it be remembered also, the better the book, the more ease in obtaining subscribers. Some women make $50 a week for many weeks running; some earn $30 a week the year round. One lady made enough money in two years' canvassing to send her boy to college, and to purchase a home. In fact,

the earnings of book-agents, even the best of them, cannot even be approximately stated. It is sufficient to say that a woman with the proper qualifications, who strictly attends to her business, who is persevering, full of courage, and who works diligently, is sure to succeed. No, there is one thing more needed—a good book.

There are a great number of subscription books offered to agents every year, but out of the whole lot very few of them are of real value. And yet, it is not necessary that a book should be, intellectually speaking, first-class, in order to meet with a sale. Some books issued by subscription at the present time cost $20 and $30 apiece. There is a cyclopedia for which the price is over $100. Such books as these, it has been found, must be sold by male agents only. It has also been discovered that women are most successful in the sale of books of a religious or semi-religious character, issued at a reasonable price. The reason

for this is apparent. They are brought in contact with the female members of families, and in thus meeting members of their own sex they are at no loss for interesting topics of conversation. For the successful book-agent, it is needless to say, does not, the moment she enters a house, present her wares and cry boldly "Buy"; she "leads up" to the business in hand.

In selecting a book a woman should go to a first-class publisher and pick out a work which, according to her judgment (and without much regard to what he may say, because he may very often be wrong), will meet a popular household demand. Let her beware of all the small catch-penny kind of publications; reproductions, from old and worn-out stereotype plates, of books that no one, who really cares for books, will be likely to buy. There are so many good subscription books coming from the press in the present day that there is hardly any excuse for a woman who will waste her

time in canvassing for poor ones. Of course, the hasty books outnumber the books of real merit, but there are enough of the latter to furnish employment to all the women who will be likely to engage in this occupation.

To give an example of the kind of publisher to be avoided, I may state that in a large Eastern city there is a man who makes it his business, at certain seasons of the year, to advertise for young lady agents. He always wants "*young* ladies," and he always wants them to be without experience. He publishes but one book, of which he is the putative author. The young ladies receive their board and a trifle for spending money at the end of every week, all living under one roof. Accounts are settled only semi-annually. At the end of the first six months it is very generally found that the young lady agent is in debt to her publisher for board, and, at all events, whatever the statement of affairs may reveal, she is told that her services are no longer required, and a fresh and inexperi-

enced damsel is at once secured to take her place.

While writing on the subject of agents, it may be well to put down a suggestion made to the author of this little book by a prominent florist. He said that it was surprising to him that ladies were not employed to solicit orders for trees, flowers, and seeds, etc. To his knowledge, no women were engaged in this occupation, and yet it seemed to be one for which they were especially fitted. Agents of this character, it appears, carry with them large books containing highly illuminated drawings of the trees or plants they are endeavoring to sell. A lady could appeal with particular propriety to females who would be likely to be purchasers. The competition in the nursery business has been very great during the past few years, but the profits of agents are said to be good. As this is a new field of female labor, it might be worth while for a woman who has a fancy for such work to endeavor to secure an agency.

## DRESS-MAKING—MILLINERY.

FROM the modest appearance of the thousands of dwellings throughout the country that bear the legend: "Fashionable Dress- and Cloak-making," no one would suppose it was a very lucrative employment. Indeed, from the dingy and broken-down aspect of some of the establishments referred to, grave doubts might be entertained as to whether the inmates were able to earn the most modest kind of a living. The fact is that the great majority of dress-makers who set up in business for themselves are not very successful, for the reason that, in most cases, they have a very superficial knowledge of the trade, and cannot meet the demand for good work.

A really first-class dress-maker is always sure

of work, in either city or country. In order to be first-class she must have served an apprenticeship with, or learned the trade of, a woman who is actively engaged in the business. A great many women think they can get a good knowledge of dress-making by the use of charts and patterns. This is not the fact. Undoubtedly charts and patterns are very useful for women who cut and make their own dresses, and they are aids in cutting and fitting generally; but so many changes have to be made, depending on the size and style of the woman to be fitted, and so much judgment is required to be used, that competent critics say that they are of no value to the professional dress-maker. One lady remarked that if all women were perfectly formed, charts and patterns would be a great help; but as the modern Eves come very far short of physical perfection, not much help could be got from them.

Some authorities say that dress-making as a trade is not so good a business in New York

as it was some ten years ago. The large dress-makers who employ considerable help are obliged to select the best locations in the city for their establishments, where the rent is very high, and to furnish their places in a style very much more expensive than in former years. As a consequence they do not pay as good wages as they once did, on account of having to lay out money in these ways.

Another change from the old methods is that the work of dress-making is, at the present time, divided into various departments. One woman will make the skirt, another will finish it, another will work on the sleeves, another will work the button-holes, and the fitting and draping are branches by themselves. The woman who would receive the highest wages to be obtained in this industry should master the whole business, and make herself competent to do all, or nearly all, the kinds of work which have just been mentioned. If she does do that, she need have no fear about obtaining employment.

There are thousands of dress-makers in the country, but very few good ones. It is a trade of which it may be emphatically said that there is "room at the top."

The dress-making season lasts from October 1st to February 1st; then there is very little to do until March 10th, when business becomes brisk and remains so until about the 1st of August. The hours of work are from 8 A.M. until 6 P.M. In the busy season it is often necessary to work in the evening. The pay ranges from $6 to $8 per week for ordinary hands, while competent women receive $10, $12, and $14 a week. The forelady in a dress-making establishment will receive $15 or $20 a week. It is her duty to superintend the girls, to see that they arrive on time, to give out the work, and to see that it is done promptly and properly.

Some women who follow this calling prefer to go out to private families and work by the day. For such service they receive $3 or $3.50

a day. In many respects this is a pleasant method, but it has its disadvantages. A woman is not always sure of how much she will earn unless, after years of work, she has secured the custom of a certain number of families, on whose patronage she can depend. There is so much responsibility and worriment attached to this way of working at the trade that the majority of dress-makers prefer to hire themselves out by the week, and feel sure of receiving each Saturday night a stated amount for their services.

The objection that applies to going out to private service is urged against a woman going into the business on her own account. Besides, in large cities it would require considerable capital to pursue such a course. A dingy, insignificant little place could not hope to get much custom, and to compete with the large establishments a woman would have to be prepared to pay a high rent, lay out a large amount in furniture, and then, probably, have to wait a

long time before she could be the owner of a good paying business. Still, if she has plenty of capital, thoroughly understands the trade, and is enterprising in her methods of securing business, there is no reason why she should not succeed, provided she has a good location.

Only the rich and the utterly incompetent patronize the milliner nowadays. It seems that women are very prompt to attend the "openings" in the spring and fall seasons, but the great majority of them do so only to see the styles. They go home and, unless they are very poor hands with the needle, make their bonnets themselves. A hat that would cost $5 in the store, a woman of taste could make for $1.50; and one that would cost $15 she could duplicate for a five-dollar bill.

An idea can thus be formed of the profits of the business, and the suggestion will probably occur to the reader that it is a good business to follow. If a woman could secure a good store,

at a reasonable rent, in a nice neighborhood, she would have a fair chance of doing well. Of course it is to be supposed that she understands the milliner's trade, and that she has gained her knowledge in a practical way. It is seldom, however, that women are successful as proprietors of such stores. Either they have made a mistake in selecting a location, or their means become exhausted while waiting for custom during the early dull days of their venture. It would take at least $2,000 or $3,000 to start a millinery store. A woman of unusually good taste and sound business judgment might get along with $1,000. The best location in New York City would be between Fourteenth and Thirty-third streets, and Broadway and Sixth Avenue; or on Broadway or Sixth Avenue.

## TEACHING.

THE profession of teaching would seem, at a first glance, to be overcrowded. School committees who are charged with the duty of selecting tutors are, it is said, overwhelmed with applicants for the positions that are to be filled. Young women are constantly striving to get places in academies, and the host of females who are seeking situations in the public schools of New York is, indeed, mighty. Notwithstanding this discouraging view, a thoroughly qualified teacher need seldom be without employment. The women who have had a solid systematic training in the English branches, and who, in addition to mere mental qualifications, have the knack, or genius, it might be called, of reaching the minds of the young, are very few.

There are plenty of superficially educated young women who "take up" teaching as their profession. They are not thoroughly grounded in the very rudiments of knowledge; they have no knowledge of, or sympathy with, children; they go through their work in a purely mechanical spirit; and they are utterly unfitted, in every way, for the profession they have selected for themselves. The woman who makes teaching her profession must have real ability, and feel herself thoroughly *adapted* for the calling.

No woman, unless she has great "influence," can hope to obtain a position in the public schools of New York. The western part of our country seems to be a good field for well-qualified teachers, who must, however, be endowed with some courage.

The country is a good place for a young lady to begin work. Positions are more easily secured, and the qualifications required are not so great as in the city.

In the schools throughout the country the

salaries of female teachers range from $300 to $1,200 a year. The smaller salary would be given in a country school; the higher salaries would be paid in the academies in the large towns, and in cities.

Teaching young children by the Kindergarten method has become very popular within the past few years, and there is quite a demand for the establishment of Kindergarten schools. In New York young ladies can learn this method of teaching in two schools; one a free school connected with a society devoted to "ethical culture," and a private school. The instruction given in the former is free, but the young women are expected to devote part of the day to the free scholars. This is an advantage, for it gives them a practical knowledge of the method. During the week there are three theoretical lessons, each lasting about two hours. So many are desirous of entering this institution, that it has been found necessary to

have a competitive examination for the admission of candidates. In the private school the price of tuition is $200. In Boston there are twenty kindergartens, all carried on by a lady. The salary of the teachers there is $600. In private families teachers are paid from $400 to $600; there is a good demand for instructors in that quarter. The price obtained from scholars taught in a kindergarten school depends solely on how much they can afford to pay; probably $50 for the school year of nine months would be the average price.

The educational market is overstocked with teachers of languages. There are so many poor, broken-down foreigners in America who are perfectly competent to teach their respective languages, that there is a very small chance for home talent. A good teacher, in the city of New York, will receive $1 an hour; but there are some who will teach as low as 25 cents an hour, and there are others who, through their

good address and social qualifications, will secure an entrance into fashionable society, and receive as high as $5 an hour for doing no better service than their poorer-paid sisters. In academies and schools a lady teaching French and German will receive her board and from $300 to $800 a year. She must have learned these languages abroad, and have the real foreign accent, or she cannot obtain employment at these rates. If she has obtained her knowledge in this country, the salary will be from $300 to $500.

Music is now so generally taught to children, that there is a good chance for competent female teachers of the art to obtain scholars. There is a wide range in the prices paid for tuition; some teachers receive only 50 cents a lesson, and some as high as $8. Those who receive the latter sum are women of very great ability, who train young ladies to become public performers. The terms depend almost alto-

gether on the wealth of the teacher's patrons; among people in moderate circumstances she will receive moderate pay, while the rich will very often give twice the amount for the same service. The ability and reputation of the teacher will have much to do with her earnings.

To become a thoroughly competent music teacher will take three or four years' instruction. It is said that a good musical education can be obtained as well on this as on the other side of the water. Many of the foreign music teachers in this country are as good as can be obtained abroad, and the European instructors, some critics say, do not give as much time and attention to pupils as the American tutors.

If a woman has a thorough knowledge of short-hand, she can do well, as a teacher of the art, in almost any community. Many persons, even in remote and small places, would learn phonography if the subject were brought to their attention by an instructor. Clergymen,

lawyers, doctors, many women of leisure, young women who would study with a view to being amanuenses—all such people could be obtained as pupils. The teacher could give from fifteen to thirty or forty lessons, at a charge of from fifty cents to a dollar a lesson. A great many learners of this art prefer to have a teacher's help, though phonography can be mastered without such aid.

Teachers of the art of decoration—the ornamentation of China screens, plaques, panels, etc.—and drawing, receive from $400 to $2,000 a year. A course of two or three years' study will fit a properly talented woman to be an art teacher. There is a fair demand for such teachers in the large schools and academies throughout the country.

# BRIEF NOTES

ON MARKET GARDENING, POULTRY-RAISING, BEE-KEEPING, HOUSE-KEEPERS, CASHIERS, BUTTON-HOLE MAKING, FLORICULTURE, AUTHORSHIP, TYPE-WRITING, AND WORKING IN BRASS.

IT would be impossible, within the limits of this little book, to go into the details of all the employments suitable for women; only the most important and best paying kinds of work have been mentioned in detail. Some brief notes are here given of various occupations in which females are now engaged, and in which they are meeting with more or less success.

**Market Gardening.**—Some women make money by raising vegetables for the city markets. The produce is sometimes sent by rail, but, as a rule, it is brought in by trucks. This industry is not, as many might suppose, confined entirely to foreigners. There are thou-

sands of American-born women throughout the country who are engaged in it, and who are doing well. Mention is made of a woman who, starting with a capital of $25, made a good living in this way, cultivating only an acre of ground. Her husband plowed and prepared the ground, and in her part of the work she had the assistance of the younger boys and the older girls. During the past year she made more money than her husband did from his farm. A woman could not expect to be successful in this occupation unless she was unusually strong and healthy, and had the taste for agricultural work very largely developed. Those who are born and brought up in the country do the best.

The raising of **poultry** for the large city markets is a lucrative occupation, or rather it can be made so, after a time, if the poultry-raiser gradually increases her stock of fowls. Even if she does not care to do this she can be pretty sure of a fair living. About $300 would be re-

quired to start in this business—$100 for the fowls, and the balance for the erection of appropriate buildings for the animals.

**Bee-Keeping.**—There is always a good market for honey, and those who understand the art of raising bees can be sure of making a fair living. Women can do just as well as men, and many ladies are very successful. It would be necessary to start with not less than thirty swarms of bees, at a cost of from $5 to $15 a swarm, or hive. If the business is properly followed, it will increase in a very short time, as the colonies multiply rapidly. There are excellent books showing how this business can be carried on, but the theoretical knowledge gained from them must be supplemented by practical knowledge gained from experience.

**House-keepers.**—The demand for house-keepers is very small; that is to say, there is very little chance for a strange woman to obtain a position of that kind. There are plenty of house-keepers, but when one is wanted she is generally found

in the person of a poor relation or struggling friend within the immediate social precinct of the family who desire her services. Such positions, however, when they can be obtained in the large cities, are looked upon as unusually good. House-keepers are employed by widowers to take entire charge of a house and look after the children, if there are any; by husbands with sick and delicate wives; or by couples who are wealthy enough to engage such service. They are paid from $30 to $100 per month, the salary depending on the duties they are expected to perform, and the wealth of the parties who employ them.

A house-keeper in a large hotel occupies a responsible position. She must possess that rare feminine virtue—the ability to "get along" with servants. The occupation is very confining, and such workers can very seldom get, at one time, many hours' recess from their work. Their wages run from $20 to $60 a month and their board; the larger the hotel, the more responsible the position and the greater the pay.

**Cashiers in Hotels.**—It requires a great deal of "influence" to get the position of cashier in a hotel; it is a situation that is very much coveted. As the cashier is employed in the restaurant, it is only in hotels that are conducted on "the European plan" where such services are required. In such hotels the guests pay so much for their room, and get their meals where they please, paying at the time for what they get. As a rule, they patronize the restaurant connected with the hotel. The cashier has to work long hours. For instance: one day she will be on duty from 8 A.M. until 8 P.M. The next day from 7 A.M. until 10 A.M.; then a recess until 5 P.M., then on duty until 12, midnight. She receives her board and a salary of from $12 to $25 a month. The board is always good. In the best hotels the cashier is allowed to order what she pleases from the regular bill of fare; other hotels have a special bill for the "officers" (as the better class of help are called), and from this the selection of food has to be made.

**Button-holes.**—Ladies do not need to be told that the button-holes in fine dresses are made by hand. This kind of work has become a separate business, although there are some seamstresses who combine the making of button-holes with their regular sewing. Dress-makers who employ twenty-five or thirty needlewomen usually keep one button-hole maker, paying her from $9 to $12 a week; very few pay the latter price. Some women who work at this trade prefer to be paid by the piece. In this case they are paid at the rate of two cents and a half per button-hole. A good worker can make fifty button-holes in a day, and earn $1.25. It would be a very smart woman who could make eighty, and earn $2 a day. One trouble about working by the piece is that the woman very often has to wait until the work is got ready for her. As she is obliged to attend on several customers during the day she often suffers from this loss of time, sometimes losing a customer through the failure

to keep an appointment, or being obliged to do a part of her work at night.

The button-holes in white vests are done by hand. The pay is one cent a button-hole, and a woman can make $1 or $1.25 a day. The work is always done during the winter months, there is plenty of it to do, and never any time lost in waiting.

**Florists.**—There are eight or ten ladies in New York and Brooklyn who have charge of floral establishments. Most of them assist their husbands; some are widows who have inherited the business. There is one lady in Brooklyn who has built up a good business solely through her own efforts. This is a very good occupation for women who love flowers, who have good taste, an eye for color and the necessary executive ability to carry on a business by themselves. Most of the florists in New York and Brooklyn get their plants and flowers at wholesale from nurseries on the outskirts, purchasing such stock as they may require from

time to time. Land is so valuable in the city that florists have long since been compelled to give up the cultivation of flowers; besides, the streets in the central and business parts are so built up, both in New York and Brooklyn, that the ground cannot be obtained at any price. Now, they have small stores where they make a display of "samples" of the different varieties of flowers.

The work is hard at times, the florist being obliged to remain up the best part of the night to fill an order, given at the last moment, for funeral or wedding pieces. The decorating of churches, halls, etc., is tiresome work, especially where palms are used, and where it is necessary to climb up and down ladders. The keeping of plants in pots in the store requires a good deal of labor. Many women call and want to see what the florist has got. She has to raise up the pots of plants many times a day, and this is very tiresome to the wrists.

The amount of capital required to start the

florist's business is nothing like as much as it was before the large nurseries supplied the florists with what they wanted at wholesale rates. The sum would probably range from $200 to $1000, depending on the location, the style in which the store was fitted up, and the amount of rent that had to be paid. The profits are good, but vary, depending on the class of custom the florist obtains; twenty-five per cent. is considered a fair profit.

The lady florist would not, probably, care to devote much time to potted plants. She could keep a few of the more common varieties, which would be sufficient. Most of her business—and the best paying part of her business—would consist in making bouquets, and selling cut flowers. That is more profitable and pleasant than the selling and propagation of plants, and would require much less manual labor. Florists keep informed about their occupation by carefully reading the catalogues issued by the various large wholesale dealers, in this country, and in

Europe, and the interesting and valuable books on Floriculture that are issued from time to time.

To establish a regular greenhouse, and raise plants and flowers for both the wholesale and retail trade, would require at least $5,000. A woman to carry on the business in that way would have to be possessed of a great deal of executive ability, give her whole personal attention to the work, and be able to manage a considerable number of men.

The business is better in the smaller cities than in either New York or Brooklyn. In Schenectady, it may be mentioned by way of illustration that, six years ago, there were no florists; now there are three.

**Authorship.**—Authorship has now become, very largely, a matter-of-fact business conducted on business principles. If any woman has any thing to say that is worth listening to she will have no trouble in securing a publisher to reproduce her thoughts in book form. The idea

that publishers strive to crush budding genius has long since been exploded. If they were guilty of doing that very often their occupation would be gone.

The woman who has a manuscript to offer for publication should first see that it is written plainly on one side of the paper. Then she should select a publisher who issues books of the same general character as the one she has written. Some publishers make a specialty of light summer novels, some of society stories, some of scientific books, and so on. The manuscript is read by a "reader," who passes judgment upon it. If his opinion is favorable the publisher reads the manuscript and decides whether he will undertake to publish it.

The book may be bought for a certain sum outright. Or, a certain amount may be paid on publication, and an additional sum after the book has attained a stated circulation; or, a royalty of ten per cent. on what will be the retail price of the book may be given; or, the

author may pay for the cost of manufacturing the book, owning the copyright, the plates, and the books printed, and paying the publisher ten per cent. for taking charge of the publication and sale of the book.

Contributions for the daily and the weekly literary papers are paid for at the rate of from $6 to $10 per one thousand words. Many young women are ambitious to write for the story papers. There is but little chance of success in this direction. Nearly all of the story papers have a regular corps of contributors, who often write under several different names, and who are paid a salary, or so much for each "instalment" of a continued story. A publisher, however, will always buy a "sensational" continued story if it is very good, and the fact that the author is unknown will not count against its acceptance. A continued story should contain not less than eight, nor more than thirteen, instalments of about four thousand words each. The pay for such a contribution would be from

$10 to $20 an instalment. There is a greater demand for short stories for the story papers, stories containing from two to four thousand words. The price paid for such tales would be $5 or $10.*

**Type-Writing.**—Young women in the large cities do well working on the type-writer. A girl with a good common-school education, who is naturally bright, and quick with her fingers, can learn in four months' time to work on the type-writer. In eight months she ought to be an expert at the business. Some pupils might be required to practise a year, or a year and a half, before they were thoroughly competent. Forty words a minute is considered a good average rate of speed. Salaries of lady type-writers in law, newspaper, and mercantile offices range from $10 to $20 a week. A woman would have to be a very expert type-writer, or

* The woman who contemplates authorship, or journalistic work, is advised to consult "Authors and Publishers; a Manual of Suggestions for Beginners in Literature." Price, $1.00. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 27 and 29 West 23d Street, New York. This is not only the latest but the best book on the subject.

have joined with the knowledge of type-writing some knowledge of short-hand, to earn $20 a week. In railroad offices type-writers are paid $60 a month. Type-writing offices, where type-writing is done for the public by the job, and where this kind of help is employed, pay $10 and $12 a week.

Some women open offices and depend on job work. They receive five cents a folio (one hundred words) for furnishing one copy of a manuscript, eight cents a folio for two, and ten cents a folio for three copies. Some charge ten cents per page (three hundred words) for furnishing one copy, twelve cents for furnishing two copies, and fifteen cents for furnishing three copies. Several copies of a page can be taken at one time on the type-writer. This is an excellent industry for women. No special talent is required, except that a woman should be a good speller and have a fair knowledge of the rules of punctuation. A new telegraph company that has just been started is, it is said,

going to employ lady type-writers in many of its offices to take down the messages as they are received by the operators. This of itself will create a great demand for lady type-writers.

**Wood-Engraving.**—It requires four or five years' study for a woman to become competent in wood-engraving. After three years of hard work she may hope to do some ordinary engraving for which she will receive compensation. In the Cooper Institute (New York), where the art is taught to women, the course of instruction covers four years. The pupils work every day from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. the year round, obtaining theoretical instruction from a teacher twice a week.

For engraving a block a trifle larger than this page a woman will receive $50. It will take her from three to five weeks to do the work, depending on the amount of experience she has had in the business. Some women occupy themselves on "catalogue work," *i. e.*, engraving the illustrations for mercantile books and

agricultural catalogues. At this branch of work they can make from $20 to $25 a week. There are very few female wood-engravers at present. To women who have the necessary talent, and who can afford to give the requisite amount of time to the study of the art, wood-engraving will furnish a sure means of making a living.

**Working in Brass.**—This is a new occupation for women that is being taught in one of the technical schools in New York. A few women are successfully doing some work in the business and receiving fair pay. A lady who has a good knowledge of drawing can, it is said, after a course of twelve lessons do marketable work. Pupils who are able to make original designs do the best. A course of twelve lessons in the school alluded to costs $10. The work is by the piece, and is paid for according to the style of the pattern. For small leaves the pay is from 60 to 70 cents each; leaves six inches in length $1 each; a panel 10 x 6 inches, $4 to $5, according to pattern. Tiles are popular and

well paid for. The work is very well suited for a woman, and her earnings ought to run from $10 to $25 a week, depending altogether on her talent. After taking lessons and learning the theoretical part of the business it would be well for a woman to go, for a short time, into some establishment where brass-work is done. There she would probably get some practical hints that would be of great service.

THE END.